

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7746
INFO AMCONSUL ADANA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 0854

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, TU

SUBJ: STUDENT VIOLENCE

REF: ISTANBUL 271

BEGIN SUMMARY: PARTISAN NAMECALLING OVER WHO BEARS THE
RESPONSIBILITY FOR RECENT STUDENT INCIDENTS HAS REACHED A HIGH LEVEL
IN THE WAKE OF THE LATEST STUDENT VIOLENCE IN ISTANBUL (REFTEL).
THE PARTIES APPEAR TO HAVE SEIZED ON THE ISSUE OF STUDENT VIOLENCE AS
A MEANS OF VENTING THEIR FRUSTRATION WITH THE PRESENT POLITICAL
STALEMATE AND AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTISAN POLITICAL GAIN.
END SUMMARY.

1. IN A JAN 28 STATEMENT, REPUBLICAN PEOPLES' PARTY (RPP)
CHAIRMAN ECEVIT CHARGED THE NATIONALIST FRONT PARTIES WITH
RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE VIOLENCE OF RECENT WEEKS, SINCE THEY
HAD BEEN "COLLECTIVELY SUPPORTING CERTAIN ORGANIZATIONS WHICH
ARE ORGANIZING ARMED AGRESSIONS AMONG THE YOUTH."
ECEVIT ALSO EXPRESSED DOUBLTS ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY
TO ENFORCE CONTROL MEASURES OR OPPOSE THE RIGHT WING COM-
MANDOS SINCE ONE OF THE NATIONALIST FRONT PARTIES (THE
REPUBLICAN RELIANCE PARTY) WAS PARTICIPATING IN THE GOVERN-
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MENT. ECEVIT HAD EARLIER (JANUARZAY 25) CALLED ON IRMAK TO

CLOSE DOWN ALL INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING UNTIL THE GOVERNMENT CRISIS HAS BEEN RESOLVED.

2. THE RIGHT HAS CONDEMNED THE RPP AND LEFTIST "ANARCHIST" STUDENTS AS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE VIOLENCE. THE JUSTICE PARTY (JP) CHAIRMANSHIP COUNCIL ISSUED A STATEMENT JANUARY 27 ACCUSING THE RPP OF "PLANNING" THE MOST RECENT INCIDENTS.

3. THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, RESPONDING TO ECEVIT'S CRITICISM, ISSUED A JANUARY 28 STATEMENT WHICH SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS TAKING ALL LEGAL MEASURES AND ACTING WITH COMPLETE IMPARTIALITY AGAINST ILLEGAL ACTIONS AND WOULD CONTINUE TO DO SO.

4. STUDENT UNREST HAS BEEN ENDEMIC IN TURKEY OVER THE PAST DECADE OR SO. IT IS FUELED IN THE FIRST INSTANCE BY STUDENT GRIEVANCES AGAINST SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS. THE PRESENT INCIDENTS, HOWEVER, SHOW A RETURN TO THE SHARP POLARIZATION OF THE CAMPUSES BETWEEN THE EXTREMES OF LEFT AND RIGHT WHICH WAS CHARACTERISTIC OF THE PERIOD BEFORE THE MILITARY INTERVENTION IN 1971. SOME OF THE UNIVERSITIES WHICH SINCE LAST FALL HAVE BEEN INTERMITTENTLY SHUT DOWN BY STUDENT BOYCOTTS AND BLOCKADES ARE NOW ALSO BEING SHUT DOWN BY ADMINISTRATORS TO PREVENT VIOLENCE. WITH MORE STUDENTS LIKELY THIS WINTER AND NEXT SPRING, MUCH OF THE SCHOOL YEAR MAY BE LOST TO STUDENTS AT THE MORE POLITICIZED FACULTIES IN ANKARA AND ISTANBUL.

5. THE IRMAK GOVERNMENT HAS SO FAR ACTED SWIFTLY AND EFFECTIVELY TO CONTROL STUDENT INCIDENTS. MOST VIOLENCE HAS BEEN CONTAINED AND CROWDS DISPERSED WITHOUT UNDUE FORCE. PROMPT ACTION MAY HAVE HELPED LOWER THE LEVEL OF ANXIETY FOR A PUBLIC ALREADY CONCERNED WITH INFLATION, SHORTAGES AND AN UNSTABLE GOVERNMENT SITUATION. THE POLITICAL PARTIES, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAVE SO FAR DONE NOTHING TO URGE RESTRAINT ON THEIR OWN PARTISANS.
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